



Video Transcription
Commissioner of Education Chris Nicastro
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Hello. I'm Chris Nicastro, commissioner of education for the state of Missouri. Thanks for watching this month's Top 10 by 20 UPDATE.

A number of important issues were discussed at the February State Board meeting. The Department presented its first draft of recommendations for supporting, and if necessary, intervening in Missouri schools. The Missouri School Improvement Program focuses on children and families, on early intervention and on maintaining community schools. The Department is dedicated to ensuring every child in Missouri has access to high quality schools in their community.

Public hearings were held in Kansas City and St. Louis. Those wishing to read the plan and comment may visit our website. I would like to mention the overwhelming amount of feedback the Department has received in the last few months on this issue. We greatly appreciate your thoughts, comments and most importantly your interest in doing what is best for Missouri's kids.

Also at the February meeting, the State Board approved the Department's recommendation to impose financial oversight over the Normandy School District. This oversight will ensure that any and all funds appropriated through the legislature are monitored and expended judiciously. It also guarantees that Normandy students will be able to finish the school year in their current location. Current seniors, who otherwise qualify to graduate under local and state requirements, will graduate this year as scheduled from Normandy High School. We look forward to working with the Missouri House and Senate as the legislature addresses this critical issue.

On another note, the State Board recently reviewed the first draft of the Annual Performance Report for Educator Preparation Programs. The report allows educator preparation programs to see how well they are meeting the State Board's expectations for preparing teachers and administrators. High standards for educators are vital to making sure that Missouri students receive the very best possible education.

Finally, I would like to congratulate a pair of Missouri students who were honored for their volunteer work. Samantha Caraway of Kirskville High School and Sarah Eisenman (EYE-ZEN-MEN) of Ladue Middle School recently won Prudential Spirit of Community Awards. The two received a \$1,000 award, a silver medallion and will travel to Washington D.C. in May.

Samantha has been an ambassador and fundraiser for the Children's Miracle Network for the last four years and helps promote positive behavior among young people. Sarah helped organize a book drive

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that donated more than 1,000 books to a St. Louis based charity. Both Samantha and Sarah are to be commended for their dedicated service to others.

I hope your school year is going well. Thanks for all you do for our kids around the state. Please continue to stay updated on our efforts to help Missouri students reach the Top 10 by 20.